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Message Text

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61
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FOR EMBASSY AND NESCO

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: NESCO, SCUL, XG

SUBJECT: NESCO CONVENTION ON RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND DIPLOMAS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES

REF: STATE 294910

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF DRAFT STATEMENT ON SUBJECT CONVENTION WHICH IS BEING CARRIED BY HEFLING FOR USE AT NICE CONFERENCE:

"ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION, I WISH TO EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION TO HAVE BEEN PERMITTED TO ATTEND
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THIS OCCASION AS AN OBSERVER.

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THE UNITED STATES BELIEVES THAT MUCH IS TO BE GAINED BY FACILITATING THE MOVEMENT OF SCHOLARS AND STUDENTS ACROSS NATIONAL BOUNDARIES AND BY THE EXCHANGE OF DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT VARIOUS EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS SO THAT THERE MAY BE A MORE COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF THE SYSTEMS IN ALL COUNTRIES AND OF THE VALUE OF THE COURSES TAUGHT AND THE DEGREES AND DIPLOMAS ACHIEVED. THIS VIEW OF THE UNITED STATES WAS EMBODIED IN THE FINAL ACT OF THE CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE WHERE THE UNITED STATES

PLEDGED ITSELF TO IMPROVE ACCESS FOR STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND SCHOLARS TO EDUCATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTIONS OF OTHER STATES AND TO INTENSIFY EXCHANGES AMONG THESE INSTITUTIONS. AMONG THE METHODS OF ACCOMPLISHING THIS GOAL WE FAVORED THE PROMOTION OF A MORE EXACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROBLEMS OF COMPARISON AND EQUIVALENCE OF ACADEMIC DEGREES AND DIPLOMAS BY FOSTERING THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON THE ORGANIZATION, DURATION AND CONTENT OF STUDIES, THE COMPARISON OF METHODS OF ASSESSING LEVELS OF KNOWLEDGE AND ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS AND, WHEREVER FEASIBLE, ARRIVING AT THE MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF ACADEMIC DEGREES AND DIPLOMAS. WE RECOMMENDED AT THAT TIME THAT APPROPRIATE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS--AND UNESCO IS CERTAINLY AMONG THESE--INTENSIFY THEIR EFFORTS TO REACH GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS OF COMPARISON AND EQUIVALENCE BETWEEN ACADEMIC DEGREES AND DIPLOMAS.

NUMEROUS EFFORTS ARE GOING ON IN THIS FIELD. THE CONVENTION WHICH HAS JUST BEEN SIGNED IS ONE SUCH STEP. IT REMAINS TO BE EXPLORED WHEHTER A CONVENTION SUCH AS THIS CAN SET A PATTERN FOR OTHER AREAS OF THE WORLD WITH MORE COMPLEX AND DIVERSE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS AND THE PURSUIT OF OUR OBJECTIVES SHOULD NOT FORCE US INTO A MOLD WHICH WOULD REDUCE THE POSSIBILITY OF ACHIEVING REAL EXCHANGE AND MOBILITY. I AM, FOR INSTANCE, MINDFUL OF THE FACT THAT IN THE UNITED STATES, AS WELL AS IN SEVERAL OTHER COUNTRIES, UNIVERSITIES ARE NOT UNDER THE DIRECT CONTROL OF A CENTRAL GOVERNMENT BUT ARE EITHER SUBJECT TO REGIONAL OR PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES OR HAVE A TENACIOUSLY GUARDED
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INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY WHICH MAKES THE AUTOMATIC RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND DIPLOMAS IMPOSSIBLE. THIS, HOWEVER, MIGHT NOT PREVENT US FROM EXCHANGING INFORMATION ABOUT EACH OTHERS EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN SUCH A WAY AS TO FACILITATE THE EXCHANGE OF STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS AND MAKE THEIR MOBILITY EASIER. A SIMILAR PROBLEM FACES THE UNITED STATES, AND I BELIEVE OTHER COUNTRIES, IN THE AUTOMATIC RECOGNITION OF DIPLOMAS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE. AGAIN,

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DECENTRALIZED SYSTEMS ARE UNABLE TO SPEAK FOR THEIR
LICENSING AUTHORITIES BUT AGAIN, AS IN THE CASE OF ACA-
DEMIC DEGREES, AN ADEQUATE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND
THE DEVELOPMENT OF SYSTEMS ON THE COMPARISON OF PROFES-
SIONAL TRAINING WOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO INCREASE THEIR
MOBILITY. IF, AS HAS BEEN INDICATED, ONE OF THE NEXT
STEPS IN UNESCO'S EFFORTS IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CONVEN-
TION FOR THE COUNTRIES OF THE EUROPEAN REGION, THE UNITED
STATES WOULD BE AN ENTHUSIASTIC PARTICIPANT IN THE DEVELOP-
MENT OF APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE, CONVINCED THAT ONLY THROUGH
A MAXIMUM EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON ALL OF THE PROBLEMS
INVOLVED CAN WE ACHIEVE OUR COMMON GOALS." ROBINSON

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